

5/24/78
Argentina
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Dear Brother Robert:

Thank you for your letter concerning the problem of political prisoners in Argentina and specifically Guillermo Martin Villalobos.

The Department has expressed its concern to the Argentine Government in the case of Guillermo Martin Villalobos through our Embassy in Buenos Aires. According to the listing of prisoners released by the Government of Argentina, Mr. Villalobos is detained at the Villa Devoto prison. This listing appears in the February 14, 1978 issue of La Nacion, an Argentine newspaper. The Embassy will continue to monitor his case.

Our Embassy also is cooperating with Argentine detainees seeking the "right of option". (This program allows prisoners held under executive detention to opt for exile instead of continued imprisonment.) People held under this program obtain a petition for release from the government authorities and turn it over to friends, relatives or a lawyer. These people then present the petition to a foreign Embassy in Buenos Aires requesting a "certificate" which states that the person would probably receive a visa from the Embassy issuing the certificate, if he is allowed to leave Argentina.

Brother Robert F. Dueweke,
Saint John Stone Friary,
Augustinian Community,
1165 East 54th Place,
Chicago, Illinois.

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
☒ Release () Excise () Deny
Exemption(s): _____
Declassify: () In Part () In Full
() Classify as _____ () Extend as _____ () Downgrade to _____
Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason _____

Lot 81D208
Box 4963 (2/12)

Once the certificate is obtained, it, together with the original petition, is returned to the prison authorities. At this point both documents are reviewed by a three-man Military Review Board which either approves or disapproves the petition. To date, the Board has only approved the right of option request for people who are considered to represent no "threat" to the Argentine Government.

The U.S. Embassy has issued certificates for qualifying prisoners and is now reviewing a number of other certificate requests. In the case of Mr. Villalobos, the Embassy is now awaiting police certification that Mr. Villalobos has not been convicted on any felony charges. This police check is a necessary part of the review process for issuance of either a certificate or a visa if he were released.

Sincerely,

Patricia M. Derian

Drafted:ARA:ECA:DVanTreeck:ce
5/24/78 Ext. 29166

Clearances:ARA:ECA:RWZimmerman
ARA/ECA:JNBumpus
ARA:GLister
HA:RCohen